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Erwin's Ire Aroused

After long hearings and committee work, the Senate Judiciary Committee had brought the bill to protect the privacy and rights of federal employees to the Senate floor. It was scheduled for floor action Tuesday. At the last moment consideration was delayed until the week of September 19, at the suggestion of Majority Leader MIKE MANSFIELD.

The man in charge of the bill, Senator SAM J. ERVIN, JR., of North Carolina, was surprised and angered by the sudden move. He inquired and learned that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the National Security Agency (NSA) had communicated with MANSFIELD and also with Republican Leader EVERETT DIRKSEN to request delay in considering the bill.

ERVIN told the Senate he could suggest from the action only that the two federal agencies "want the unmitigated right to kick federal employees around, deny them respect for individual privacy and the basic rights which belong to every American regardless of the mission of the agency."

Senator ERVIN may be jumping at

some conclusions. While the two agencies no doubt would desire exemption from the proposed law, it may not be for the specific reasons cited by ERVIN.

The CIA, in particular, has to operate in a manner differing in many respects from the rules applicable to employees in other agencies and departments. In this respect, it is like the military branches. Those who enter its service do so with an understanding of their obligations and of the special requirements of the CIA in fulfilling its mission.

A good, strong protest against the procrastination of the CIA and NSA in bringing their objections or in seeking exemption from provisions of the committee-approved measure was in order. Senator ERVIN's outburst may serve as such, but it cannot invalidate any reasons to be advanced by these agencies for the exemption they seek. Only careful scrutiny and evaluation of the merit, or lack of merit, in the presentations of the two agencies can determine whether they should be included or exempted from the requirements of the ERVIN bill.

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